JULIA,

THE

SUNDAY SCHOOL

GIRIL.



PHILADELPHIA:

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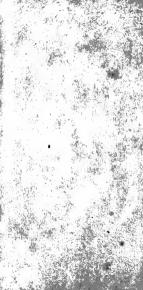
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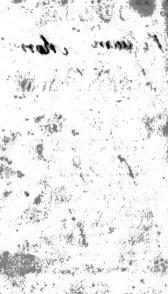
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JULIA.

Ir was on a Sabbath-Day afternoon, as near as I can recollect, (the exercises of the school were just finished,) when a little girl came and informed me that one of her school-fellows of the name of Julia was dangerously ill, and wished much to see me: the manner and countenance of my pupil seemed to indicate that her school-fellow was very bad. I immediately took a memorandum of her place of abode, "When a Sunday School child sends for me," thought I, "tis surely my duty to go; how can I tell but that this dear child may be a lamb of the Saviour's flock, and if He 'takes them in his arms, and carries them in his bosom,' shall I

feel less affection for them ?" " Tell her," said I to the little girl, "Tell her I will call and see her the first opportunity." Walking home, I endeavoured to recollect the child I was about to visit, and soon remembered her. She was among those meek and quiet children who re-tire from the notice of their teachers, and speak more by actions than by words; I remembered the rosy countenance she always had, which seemed to indicate so much health that I little expected to hear of her being so soon upon a sick, and probably a dying bed; she seemed to exemplify Dr. Watts' description of the rose, where he says,

"How fair is the rose! what a beautiful flow'r!

The glory of April and May!
But its leaves all begin to fade in an hour,
And wither and die in a day."

"Like the rose," thought I, "she bloomed and looked fair for life, and like the rose, she now withers in the hands of disease, and perhaps of death! May this occurrence impress upon the minds of my little flock the uncertainty of health! may it make them seriously concerned to devote their youth to God, and not leave the thoughts of eternity and the salvation of their immortal souls to a dying hour." I felt the more desirous of visiting this dear child, when I recollected the unassuming behaviour she always manifested in the school. "If her teachers knew not much of her," said I, "she perhaps possessed that 'meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price.'"

I embraced the first opportunity of visiting my afflicted pupil; her habitation was situated in one of those confined courts with which Southwark abounds. The mother opened the door, and upon mentioning my name, she asked me to walk in. I found upon inquiry, that her daughter was very ill of a fever, and the doctor gave but little hopes of recovery : after giving her a most excellent character as a daughter, she asked me to go up stairs and see her, which request I immediately complied with. I ascended a dark flight of steps, and, the mother following me, I opened the room door, expecting to find my young invalid alone, but a scene presented itself to my eyes that

truly affected my heart. At the foot of the bed on which the dear child lay, sat two of her elder school-fellows-one with a Bible in her hand, which she evidently had been reading, the other in tears, which a feeling sympathy for the suffer-ings of her school-fellow had no doubt excited. My sudden and unexpected entrance caused some confusion; but, to relieve them, I immediately went up to the dear child, and taking my seat by her side, I asked her how she was: "Very ill, Sir," said she.—The flush of her countenance manifested the feverish state of her body, and at the same time its features seemed to indicate distress of mind: in this supposition I was not mistaken, for on inquiring the state of her mind, she replied, "Very unhappy in-deed, Sir." "What makes you feel unhappy?" continued I:—"Oh, Sir!" she replied, "I have been a great sinner, and I am afraid to die." Her manner plainly showed her sincerity.-" 'Tis a great mercy," neturned I, "to feel your-self a sinner: Did you ever hear of a Sa-viour?" "Yes, Sir, but I am afraid he will not hear my prayers, I have been so great a sinner." After some further conversation, in which I endeavoured to comfort her distressed mind, I prayed with her: it was a sweet reflection to my mind, when I kneeled down, that Jesus once took children in his arms, and blessed them. 'Surely,' thought I, 'he who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," will not refuse to hear our prayers for this dear child.'

It was a solemn opportunity.—To pray for Sunday-School Children is pleasant, to pray with Sunday-School Children is delightful, but to pray with praying Sun-day-School Children is truly interesting; and such I hope was the present case-at least I seemed to feel it as such. I arose from my knees, refreshed by the exercise .- "Pray for yourself," said I, taking the hand of my afflicted Pupil, "and seek at the hands of a willing Saviour that mercy you so much need." I then turned to her two school-fellows, and told them I felt pleased at seeing the affection and sympathy they manifested towards their afflicted friend, and I trusted they would find it "better to go to the house of Mourning, than the house of Feasting."

After leaving the habitation, I could not but meditate upon the scene I had just witnessed. My visit being totally unexpected, I well knew that what I had seen was no premeditated plan. To see two of the elder children in the school visiting their schoolfellow in the chamber of affliction-to see that they had been reading for her consolation, that Bible which they had been taught to read for themselves-to see them thus employed, excited feelings which I cannot describe. I thought of that promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them, and that to bless them."

"O, may the dear afflicted child," said I, "be among the lambs of the Saviour's flock; and may her two sympathising schoolfellows hear, in the Day of Judgment, that happy sentence, 'Come ye blessed of my Father, and enter the Kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world;' 'For I was sick, and ve visited me.'"

I will not detain my readers much longer, but perhaps they would wish to hear whether the dear child died, or recovered from the affliction. Under the blessing of a kind Providence, the fever took a favourable turn, and she once more visited the School. I naturally watched over her with an anxious eye, to see what effects the late affliction had left upon her mind; her serious attention made me entertain some favourable hopes; and being well aware that time alone would prove the reality of these impressions. I continued to observe her, till she was suddenly removed to a great distance from the School, on account of her parents changing their place of abode. When she bid me farewell, I indulged a the distance was so great that I could obtain no tidings of her; added to which, my removal to another School shut up every channel of information. "Should I see her no more here," said I, " may I meet her in a brighter world, where if Teachers and Children meet, they shall part no more for ever." Although removed from one school to another, I still felt an interest in the welfare of those I had left behind, some of whom mani-fested the tender "blossoms of piety," yet in all inquiries after them, I could hear nothing of my late young pupil.

Some years elapsed; and although I felt a desire to have seen her again, yet I could not but think that she was now no more. "Sweet child of my flock," thought I, "if it had been the will of Heaven, I would have followed thee to the grave, and have paid to thy mortal remains my last tribute of affection; I would have listened with consolation to the voice of thy Mother, while she gave me her testimony to thy duty and piety; and had thy grave been near, I would have gathered around it my little flock, and, relating to them the simple annals of thy life, I would have inscribed upon thy memorial, "For of such is the King-dom of Heaven."

On a Sunday Morning, the weather being unusually serene; the glorious sun arose without a cloud, and shed a sweet lustre over the face of nature. The little birds were offering their grateful notes of praise to their great Creator; and, to increase the beauty and harmony of the scene, the lofty trees and flowers were decked with innumerable spangles, from the beams of the rising sun shining upon the dew which had distilled upon their leaves. The freshness of the pure air invigorated the spirits, while the mind seemed to accord with the serenity of the seene. It reminded me of the morning of the resurrection, when, waking from the sleep of death, the Christian will behold a scene far more magnificent, and experience feelings far more in unison. It is strikingly expressed by Dr. Watts, where he says.

"Then burst the tomb in sweet surprise, And in my Saviour's image rise."

With such meditations, on such a day, when I was about to enter into the delightful employment of teaching the dear children, I could not but mingle their names with my thoughts, and felt a desire that all of them, with their teachers, might rise thus triumphant in the morn of the resurrection.

The duties of the School being ended, I went to a Church, in the forenoon, not far distant; it was so full when I entered, that I was under the necessity of remaining close to the door. I had not long remained there, before it opened, and what was my surprise, when, in the countenance of the person that entered, I dis-

cerned the features of my late Pupil! She was neatly dressed as a servant, had a Bible in her hand, and passing on without seeing me, she took her station just before me. I had the opportunity of observing her attention to the service, in which she manifested much seriousness of deportment. After it was over, she recognized me, and as soon as she got outside the door, she made a respectful courtesy, and said, with her usual meekness, "How do you do, Sir?" After answering her inquiries, I seized the first opportunity of ascertaining her present situation in life. She related, with much modesty, her artless tale; and I found that she was in service, and suffered some reproach from her fellow-servants on account of being religious. "I have a fellow-servant," said she, "that loves the Bible, and we often read it together; we are laughed at and ridiculed by the other servants, but we endeavour to bear it patiently. I can only attend a place of worship on a Sabbath-Day, Sir," she continued, "but I have so kind a mistress, that I ought not to repine; and especially when I see others who scarcely ever go out, and whose mistresses will not suffer

them to go to a place of worship." Among other observations, I had reasons to hope that she was walking in the paths of piety, and addraing, by a consistent life, that gospel which she had often heard, and which she evidently professed.

Oue thing I cannot omit to mention; it was the tender anxiety she manifested for a younger sister, who, by her undutiful conduct, was a great trial to her Mother. How much she lamented that the good instructions at the School seemed to have no effect upon her! I exhorted her to pray for her sister,-to manifest the blessed effects of the gospel by her conduct and conversation,-to read her Bible daily, -and meditate upon it; -above all, to pray for the influences of the Holy spirit, to enable her to feel its impor-tant truths. I told her, I had given up every hope of seeing her in this world, but looked forward to a happy meeting above.

"I hope you do not forget," said I, "the instructions you have received at the Sunday School."—"Oh, no, Sir," she immediately replied, "I shall never forget the School; I bless God I ever en-

tered a Sunday School, and I shall not soon forget an exhortation I once heard at the School from these words, 'God is Love,' the Teacher spoke so much upon the love of God: I hope I shall be ever enabled to love so good a God."

We now came to a turning which led to her mistress's house.—"Well, Julia," said I, taking her hand, "good-bye; should we meet no more here, may we meet around the Throne of God and the Lamb!" She made a courtesy, and bade me farewell.

To describe my feelings on this occasion may not, perhaps, much interest my readers. There is a tender tie formed between the teacher and a good child, which unites the watchfulness and tenderness of a shepherd with the kindness and affection of a parent: we feel their sorrows, and participate in their joys. I felt much encouragement in seeing the effects of early instruction; "Here," thought I, "is a proof of the truth of that scripture, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days,'"